PH-Releases

Dear Paul, 11/15/77

I'll be talking to Jim before I mail this. I did not phone him last night after reading your 10/8 Army Intelligence memo because he has a touch of the flu and did not want to risk waking him if he were abed, particularly because he also has pleurisy and that can very much interfere with sleep.

After writing you and before falling asleep I thought more and decided to let the DJ know about this. First this a.m. I wrote Jim, then the litigation chief with whom we've been dealing. All I've used of your memo is the quote from the first FBI record, of the Hidell card, to establish continued FBI withholding from me. As I think I told you Jim put such allegations in a special context in C.A.75-1996 and has it in the record before the judge and should there be an appeal, available to that court after appeal.

Then I had to get a little exercise, as I'll explain. After that I went over the Army FOIA/PA file to which I had easiest access. From the content it is incomplete. I have more. But I have it over the signature of Boulanger of the Army that as of 1971 they had no JFK files. Since then and from various components to and including this year the same and other denials of any records. However, from a civilian about to retire I learned that there is a record of prior existence. These denials include Fort Meade. Before you can receive this the right people in DJ will know. They also know that Jim and I are willing to take time and make an effort to avoid suit. Now bear in mind that they represent the entire government in FOIA suits, not just DJ and FBI, their current client with us. Also bear in mind that they are to the ears in needless suits and many official dishonesties in them. They have motive for cleaning some of this up. It is not unlikely that they have some responsibility for the coming releases of the supposedly entire JFK file. (On this is you have kept a list of file numbers that could be very useful.) Thus there is the possibility that perhaps we can force other releases, more now since the other agencies will consider that the sheer volume of the FBI's will obscure anything in their records. If we can establish that the Army did not lie to me, that it did in fact destroy its JFK records, that would be important. This is one of the reasons I asked you not to tell anyone. in particular not to tell the committee, which I do not trust and have no reason to think of trusting. Besides, it is now playing the p.r. game, to come up with enough to intimidate the Congress into continuing them. There is nothing in their record to lead me to believe they will be other than as irresponsible when that time comes. Whatever your feeling - could they be longings ? - I believe that from their experiences and what they have observed Jim and Howard will say substantially what I am saying. If these assassins did not establish what wea are now dealing with in the first month of their life on that basis alone they are hoelessly incompetent or what is much worse, determined to avoid what we cannot agree to their avoiding. You appear from your memos not to have recognized this determination - and it is also a predetermination - of the committees of the past.

You do your thing your way, think what you want to think. Because of their record and because they have given me a Ray conflict I can have nothing to do with them unless and until they eliminate that conflict. The confession this would require of them makes it quite unlikely if not impossible.

I do not have ready access to all my files. I looked for one I'm sure I established for your lists and comments on them and find I do not know where it is. This all requires further explanation because otherwise it won't make sense to you.

My office is so crowded, particularly with file cabinets, it is not easy to move around in it. It is a small office to begin with. I've had to block the doors to the porch, which I always kept open in hot weather, with file cabinets. They even partly block the small air conditioner. My office is at an end of the house, as you may recall, and the other air conditioners cannot blow cool air into it.

A real backlog began to accumulate when I was taken ill the end of April 1975. For some time thereafter I was also weak. It got serious that October when the thrombophlebitis was belatedly diagnosed. Since then I've had to rearrange files and use the lower drawers for

storage. I've had to take files to thebasement. For some months I've not been able to file down there what I have had to take there. Estimating what I would be less likely to need has been neither easy nor always accurate. What I took to the basement was sometimes proven to be files I should not have taken down there.

Were all of that systematized there would still be time when I'd not have ready access because there are times when stairs are contra-indicated. Times when I'm woozy, times when this hits me suddenly, unexpectedly.

Early this year new troubles developed. Again diagnosis was late in coming, then developed outside my medical cooperative. It turns out that I also have an arterial problem, what the specialist termed an "embarrassment" to the arteries. This led to much more weakening. Since early August I've been systematically trying to rebuild, meanwhile having lost more than 30 pounds. When the weather permits, as today, I go out and try what I can that is permitted. Hills were not until two weeks ago. While doing this (and wondering if I've lost myself) each time I was interrupted by the phone I also went out and dragged firewood to the house. Not too much, to learn how much I can do safely. Branches trimmed off by a friend who cut some trees down so we can use the fireplace. Surprising how much we can. With the temperature yesterday not so much above freezing I had the furnace off most of the day and entirely during thebelow-freezing night. I turned it on this morning only long enoug to warm the house to 60 for Lil when she awakened. When she did and came to the living-kitchen area it was warmer, warm enough. Of course the amount of wood I salvage from limbs is inconsequential, but it sure as hell is less boring than wlaking up and down the lane, the only earlier exercise. But whatever I do it is a major intrusion into other work and a real interference with concentration.

My recollections of where I have put things are less clear than they used to be. Whether the circulatory problems contribute to this or not, there was kore than enough before so recalling was never easy.

With this I'm seeking to let you know that today there are more limits on what I can undertake, fewer paths I can try to follow, together with new needs if I am to be able to do well what I am doing.

It will be less than a week before I know whether the fact of the realease of those FBI files prior to your 10/8 memo on them has the significance I can see in them. It may and what I'm trying to do with them may not yield what I think it can. However, I am certain of the decision to make that effort and it is begun.

What concerns me more and leads me to take this time for explanations that remain far from complete is a greater concern, that this could have been unknown to me for so long and that you had no independent means of being aware of any potential in it as it could relate to what Jim and I are into. I believe both he and Howard will agree that it is possible that this can also be used in connection with the recent personal records on me that Howard and I have obtained from both GSA and Archives. In this I mean interms of yielding other records as well as in limiting their role in all of this. There now is no question but what they have been other than scholarly, even honest. There is no question in my mind that it could have made a significant difference if Jim and I had known of this release two days after your memo is dated. This is not because of its content but because of the legal relaities that content and the fact of the release address.

While I am not looking for anything extra to read and with my minuscule income can't afford any other expenses I would like to learn from this and avoid any possibility of repetition. I would like for Jim to be in the same position. Howard too, busy as he is with his new and very worthwhile life, because he knows the law and has his own records, recollections and capabilities.

What I would like is for the three of us to know of these things as they happen and for the three of us to have as complete a set of such records as you can provide going back to probably the 1970 declassification by the Archives but covering all agencies. I'll repay you the costs. Unless you have sent them these lists and memos and they have them readily available, already filed. With Jim he may have them and not be able to retrieve.

With me I'd like to ask a greater favor still, try to arrange what you would send in a way that might thwart my forgetting when I'm busy and too tired and otherwise concerned. Several things accur, if you are willing. One is to get some kind of gaufy file folder, another is to staple all these into it. For my use it would be better to staple at the extreme upper lefy-hand corner. If you would then also put a paperclip on any page you think in the light of what I've been saying I should read promptly I would do that. If when I do it seems that I should have duplicate records, as with the current I should and will, for Army, I'll make them here. If you would label it something like Hoch-Releases, then the labelling would be different and would attract my attention the next time I have to more files out of my office.

I have a very clear recollection of having written you several months ago about a memo you then sent me. But I can't find it anywhere today. I did look. So I started what I'm sure I had before, a Hoch-Releases file for this newest material. If I stumble over the earlier copies I'll put them all together. However, I may not have all and I may not stumble over them.

I know you are busy and that this may present other problems to you. If you can't or do not want to, okay.

I would also suggest that you let me know if there is an absolute prohibition on any use. You say in this one that you would prefer that those receiving it (unknown to me, of course) not make any use. However, you also had no way of knowing that the mere fact of the release could be as significant as it is. So in the future, if there is reason for there to be no mention, I'd appreciate more explicitness, like over my dead body.

If you have any questions, please ask. Meanwhile, unless I have something to add after I speak to Jim, many thanks.

Best,